

MAN'S Extremity,
G O D S
O P P O R T U N I T Y.

O R,

A Display of GODS Sovereign Grace,
in Saving a PEOPLE whole Re-
covery, as to Men and Means is next
to desperate :

As it was delivered in A SERMON
Preached before the Honourable
Lieutenant Governour, & Counsell-
ors, and the Assembly of Repre-
sentatives of the Province of the
Massachusetts Bay in New England.

On MAY 29: 1695.

Which was the Day for ELECTION
of Counsellors for that Province.

By the Reverend Mr. SAMUEL TORREY,
Pastor of the Church in *Weymouth.*

Isa. 57.18. I have seen his ways, & will heal him.

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Rev T Wentworth Higginson
of Newbury
at Fitchburg Mass



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To the READER.

Christian Reader.

HOW Seasonable the following Discourse was and how well accommodated to the Occasion for which it was Lettled, and Audience before whom it was Delivered, may possibly be questioned by such as either are possessed with an overweening Opinion of a Negative Commendation given us, that we are not so bad, or so far gone as many other People who make a Profession; or are little concerned in observing, either Men or Providences, and comparing them with Scripture Rules: But he that shall seriously ponder how far we are declined from what we sometimes were; how many things are Dead among us, and how these that Remain are ready to dy; how much God hath done for us more than for many others, and how we have Requited him; how long he hath been dealing with us in a way of Judgments, and what means have been used to Reclaim us; all which notwithstanding, neither are we returned to God, nor is his Anger turned away from us; cannot but Subscribe to it, and say, it was a Word upon it's Wheels. And truly, when we are cast in Common Law, what have we to hope in but Prerogative Mercy? When Good Men in all Orders find all attempts to recover a Backslidden People awfully to be frustrated, needs must they sink in dispondency, and lose their Faith and Hope, did they not encourage them by this consideration, that as God can, so he frequently doth, take such an Opportunity to make himself known; and so have the whole Glory of such a Peoples Salvation ascribed to him:

To the READER.

The Author of this Sermon, is one whose Works Praise him in the Gates, and cannot be added to by any commendation of mine. He hath lived to see many changes in this Land; and being awfully sensible of the decays of Practical Holiness, and the solemn Tokens of Divine displeasure at a People who were sometimes highly favoured by their God; hath on all Occasions been ready to thrust into the Gap, and endeavour the preventing of Ruin, by promoting a thorow Reformation: but finding how little Success such Essays have had, hath thereupon, with Eli, Sat trembling for the Ark of the God of Israel: & had fainted, but that he believed to see the Salvation of God. He hath here told us, where he found relief against his sinking and overwhelming thoughts, even in him who works for his Great Name, when it hath been Profaned by a People of his Covenant: and hath recommended it for an excellent help to encourage the Faith, and animate the Prayers of the truly Godly unto perseverance in waiting to See Gods Salvations; assuring us that neither our Sins, nor our present Impenitence, can obstruct Gods Grace, or prevent his appearing for our help, in Subduing our Iniquities, and restoring us to his favour: that when times are never so black, second causes afford little or no relief, and there is none shut up or left, yet Cælo restat iter, and there is
THEOS APO MECHANES. *That the Publication of this Sermon, may answer the desires of these who earnestly sought for it, and be made profitable, as to show us more of our own State, so to put us upon greater industry in all present necessary duties; and (because there is yet hope in Israel,) to set upon the work so often solemnly pressed upon us, & hitherto so little pursued, shall be the Prayer of,*
One that waits for the Consolation of Israel,
S. WILLARD.



MAN'S EXTREMITY, GOD'S OPPORTUNITY.

Hosea I. 7.

*But I will have mercy upon the House of
Judah; and will Save them by the Lord
their God.*

WE find in the Context,
that the House of Israel;
(that is) the ten Tribes
having by their Spiritual
Whoredoms, given not
only Conception, but Birth both unto *Loru-
bamah* and *Loammun*: God in his Holy Jeal-
ousy and Righteous Judgment, had resolved
to cast them off for their Apostacy, unto
Idolatry, as a Reprobate People? Wherefore,

he raised up and sent this Prophet, to give them the sad and certain intelligence, of that his most dreadful Resolve against them; the Prophet having received his doleful Message, in a grievous Vision; he delivers it in a most direful Threatning, at once denouncing the utmost Extremity, of all kind of Calamity and Misery, in their being given up totally, both unto Sin and Judgment; this we have in the latter part of the *sixth verse*. *I will no more have mercy upon the House of Israel; but I will utterly take them away!* And further, to Accumulate, and Exaggerate, this heavy Threatning in the burthen of it, upon the House of Israel: God doth at the same time, and in the very next words, propose and proclaim, a very gracious and glorious Promise, of Mercy and Salvation, to the House of Judah, *verse 7*. *But I will have mercy upon the House of Judah, and will save them by the Lord their God.* Judah (was at this time) a very Sinful, Backsliding People; sinking into a depth of gross Apostacy to Idolatry also; which God upbraids them with, judging and condemning them, as more vile and inexcusable, than Israel, *Jer. 3. 11*. Yet God, in his Sovereign Grace, makes a sure Promise of Mercy and Salvation, to Judah! *But I will have mercy upon the House of Judah, and engage myself to perform it, by saving of them,*

them, in a more immediate and extraordinary way of working by himself; *and will save them by the Lord their God*; intimating thereby, that Judah also was past hope of Salvation in any ordinary way: Whence we have this

DOCTRINE.

That at some times, and in some cases, God doth in Sovereign Mercy, Save his Churches and People; both from Sin and Judgment, in a more immediate and extraordinary way of working by himself.

I will have mercy upon the House of Judah, and will save them by the Lord their God: This great comprehensive Promise contains the Summe of all Promises of Temporal Salvation to the Church, both from Sin and Judgment, which God hath made, or doth accomplish, in this world; and therefore it hath been, and doth remain the foundation of Faith, Hope, Confidence & Comfort, to the Church in all Ages, in their greatest depths, when they have been most ready to perish in their Apostacy, Calamity and Misery. The Promises of God, the Prayers of the Church, and all the most Notable Instances of such glorious Salvations, which we find recorded in the

Word

Word of God, do all concur, to prove;
*That God at some times, and in some cases, doth
 in Sovereign Grace, save his Churches, both from
 Sin and Judgment in a more Immediate and
 Extraordinary Way of working by himself:*

This Doctrine opens it self unto us, with
 a fulness of Scripture Evidence in the several
 parts of it;

1. *That all Salvations to the Children of men
 are from God; He who is God alone, must
 needs be the only Saviour; therefore he is
 emphatically styled, the Saviour; Isa. 45. 15.
 O God of Israel the Saviour; and verse 21.
 There is no God else besides me, a just God and a
 Saviour; Isa. 43. 11. I even I am the Lord,
 and besides me there is no Saviour; therefore he
 is styled the God of Salvation, Psal. 68. 20.
 He that is our God is the God of Salvation;
 hence Salvation belongs only to the Lord, Psal. 3.
 8. all who know and believe him to be
 God, must needs acknowledge him to be the
 only Author of all, both Temporal, Spiritual
 and Eternal Salvations, to all the Children of
 men, who partake of any Salvations, Isa. 45.
 22. Look unto me and be ye Saved, all the Ends of
 the Earth, for I am God, and there is none else.*

2. *That God works divers kinds and degrees of
 Salvation: there are divers wayes of Salvati-
 on, wherein God works as a Saviour; there
 are external, common, general Salvations,
 which*

which God works in his common Providence; these God works in divers wayes and degrees for all the Children of men. By these Salvations it is that he moderates all the Evils of the Curse, so far as to give man a Being and Subsistence in this world, more or less comfortable, as seemeth good to him; *Psal. 107. per tot.* We have an Induction of such kind of Salvations, with a reiterated Exhortation, *To Praise the Lord for his Goodness and for his wonderful Works to the Children of men*: Again, God works such Salvation in common Providence also, but in special Mercy to his Churches and People, *Deut. 33. 29. Happy art thou O Israel, who is like to thee, a People Saved by the Lord.* There are also Special Salvations which God worketh for his Churches and People, in the way of his Spiritual Providence, in Saving Mercy; which are the only Saving Salvations, and which hold a necessary Connection with *Eternal Salvation*; this is the most glorious Salvation which God works for his People in this World, when he Saves his People from their Sins, and from all Spiritual Evils and Enemies, and to this all Promises of Salvation to the Church in this World, do ultimately referr. This is, and will be the Consummation of all Temporal Salvations to the Church in this World, as it will appear gloriously in the last and full Accomplish.

complishment of this Promise in our Text, when that Acclamation shall be heard, Rev. 12. 10. *Now is come Salvation and Strength, the Kingdom of our God, and the Power of his Christ.*

3. That God works all, both Temporal and Spiritual Salvations for his Churches and People, either more Mediatly or more Immediately: he works common Salvation in a way of mediate, ordinary Providence; and so all Gods Propitious, Prosperous Providences may be said to be Salvations? God works special, extraordinary Salvations for his People in a more Immediate, Extraordinary way of Providence; although it may not be altogether Immediately, yet more immediately; there may be a more Immediate Influence of Divine Wisdom and Power, which may make the Salvation wrought, *Wonderful*, if not *Miraculous*; such as God wrought for his Church of Old, in Egypt, in the Wilderness, in the times of the Judges, and of some of the Kings, and afterwards. In this way of working it is that God is said to Save his People *by his own Right Hand, and by his own Arm*, Psal. 44. 3. Psal. 77. 15, and to Save them *with an High Hand, and Outstretched Arm*, Exod. 6. 6. and 14. 8. When the Lord doth make bare his Arm, then all the Ends of the Earth may see his Salvation: Isa. 52. 10. Most immediately God works,
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in working of Spiritual Salvations: Now God may be said to work more immediately.

1. When he works as a Creator; when it is Creating Work, (and in some respects) the most Glorious Creating Work, or Work of Creation, for God to Create to himself a People, a Church, Psal. 102. 18. *The People that shall be Created, shall Praise the Lord, so* Isa. 41. 20. Isa. 43. 1. *Thus saith the Lord that Created thee, O Jacob, &c. ver. 7. For I have Created him for my Glory; and ver. 15. I am the Lord, the Creator of Israel, your King. Surely God will work more gloriously by himself, in Creating the New Heavens and the New Earth, Isa. 65. 17, 18. For behold I Create New Heavens and a new Earth, be you glad and rejoice for ever in that which I Create; for behold, I Create Jerusalem, a rejoicing, and her People a joy: Isa. 45. 8. Drop down ye Heavens from above, and let the Skies pour down Righteousness; let the Earth open, and let them bring forth Salvation: I the Lord have Created it.* Observe, God Createth this most Glorious Spiritual Salvation for his Church.

2. God works more immediately by himself in saving of his People, when he works by a more full and glorious exercise of the Power of Christ Mediator. God works all Salvations by his Son; he is therefore eminently styled, the Saviour; he hath wrought Spiritual and Eternal

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nal Redemption and Salvation; and he applies it to all his Elect: He is Exalted by Gods own Right-Hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, Acts 5. 31. There is Salvation in none other, nor any other Name given under Heaven amongst men, whereby we can be Saved: Acts 4. 12. he is therefore called Jesus, Because he came to Save his People from their Sins, Mat. 1. 21. All Temporal Salvations wrought for the Church of Old, are attributed unto him; Isa. 63. 10. In all their Afflictions he was Afflicted, and the Angel of his Presence saved them; God appeared and wrought by him, in Saving his People out of Egypt, Exod. 3. 2. in the Wilderness, Exod. 23. 20. and in bringing of them into Canaan, Josh. 5. 13, 14. and in bringing the Church out of Babilon, Zech. 1. 12. thus God alwayes Saved his People by the Angel of his Presence; and therefore all Salvations which God works for his People in all Ages of the World, until the Church Militant become Triumphant, are ascribed to him, Rev. 7. 10. Salvation to our God, and the Lamb; that is to God working more immediately by Christ Mediator.

3 God works more immediately to Save his People by himself; that is by his Spirit, Zech. 4. 6. not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts; that is more immediately by my self. This is none other than the same

same Promise with this in our Text, renewed *just then*, at the first period of the Signal Accomplishment of it; though it may have a more full and notable Accomplishment, not only unto them, but to the whole Church of God in the World, at the *time appointed*; and truly, this great Promise of the Spirit, (so often renewed in the Scripture,) it hath been and ever will be in successive Accomplishment to the Church; it is that whereby the Church hath lived, and been upheld in all Ages, as the foundation of their Faith, Confidence and Perseverance.

4. God works more immediately by his Word when he make it mighty and powerful, to all the saving Effects and Ends of it; especially in the Conversion & Reformation of his People; he works all saving work, all Spiritual Salvation for his Church by the means of the Ministry of his word; (that is) he works more immediately by this means, it being the highest means of the working of Divine Wisdom and Power, especially upon the Souls of men: the Church in their return out of Babylon, could not recover themselves, nor be recovered by any through Reformation unto Salvation until God wrought more immediately by the Ministry of his Word, in the Propheying of Haggai and Zechary, Ezra. 6. 14. as we read more at large Hag. 1. 12, 13, 14. Then Zerubbabel the Son
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of Shealtiel and Joshua the High Priest, with all the remnant of the people, did obey the voice of the Lord, and the words of Haggai the Prophet: and they did fear the Lord: then spake Haggai the Lords Messenger in the Lords Message to the People, saying, I am with you saith the Lord; Observe, when the Word works, then God is with a people to Save them; therefore it follows, and the Lord stirred up the Spirit of Zernbabel: Nothing could be done until God himself, wrought by himself in the Ministry of his Word, and then all Saving Work went on powerfully and prosperously. Thus we may understand how God Saves his People by the Lord their God, which was the main thing to be opened and proved; But,

4. There are certain times, and extraordinary cases, wherein God thus Saves his People by himself, (that is) in general, when their Condition in it self, and as to them, is altogether hopeless and helpless; either respecting their Sins, growing more and more general, powerful, incorrigible, poenal, judicial, past any ordinary hope of Reformation; their Defection and Apostacy in the Life and Power of Religion to deep, that there is no ordinary hope of recovery. All both Spiritual and Political Wounds, & Sickneses; so immedicable & incurable that they are past ordinary hope of healing; so when a people are in extrem,

inevitable danger of perishing in their own sins, under Gods Judgments, both Temporal and Spiritual Judgments; unless God, in Sovereign Mercy, appear and work Salvation for them by himself: When all things are *past man, past means*; when the Wisdom, the Power, the Heart, the Spirit, the Prayers, Endeavours and Labours of man fail, then it is time for the Church to cry out, as Psal. 119. 26. *It is time for thee, Lord, to work*: More particularly;

I. *When a People are fallen into such a depth of Spiritual Heart Apostacy, as that they are thereby become, not only secure, but utterly senseless, sottish, stupid, supine, and so altogether ignorant, careless, regardless of the greatest Concernments of their own Good and Welfare, and of their own Salvation, either from Sin or Judgment, as being senseless of both, not minding, nor caring which way things go, nor what doth become of themselves, or of the main interest of God, of Christ, or of the Churches; ready to speak as they, Ezek. 33. 10. If our Transgressions and Iniquities be upon us, and we pine away in them, how then can we Live, as if they should have said, there is no hope, we shall perish in our sins, and thus they conclude, carelessly and desperately; and as they Isa. 3. 6. In that day shall he swear, saying, I will not be a Healer, make me not a Ruler of the People:*

People ; It follows, verse 8. *For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: Thus they gave up themselves as desperate.*

2. *When those who are sincerely concerned for the Welfare and Salvation of the People and Churches, are altogether dispirited, and succumb under sinking discouragements; Hearts fainting, Spirits failing, have no heart left in them, to make any further essay, or to do any thing, but to sit down, Mourn, Weep and Lament, as the Prophet, Jer. 8. 18. When I would comfort my self against sorrow, my heart is faint in me; the Harvest is past, the Summer is ended, and we are not healed; for the hurt of the Daughters of my People, I am hurt, I am black, Astonishment hath taken hold upon me: Is there no Balm in Gilead? Is there no Physician there? so Jer. 9. 1. O that mine head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of Tears, that I might weep day and night, &c. so Mic. 7. 1. Wo is me! When it is thus, it is time to cry, Help Lord! Psal 12. 15.*

3. *When God seems to have wrought, and done for a people, all that can ordinarily be done, by the improvement of means, to save them from all destroying Evils, especially from their Sins; and to reclaim and reduce them to himself; and to secure and advance both their Temporal and Spiritual Welfare. When God speaks after the manner of men, as it were Complaining,*

Complaining, Isa. 5. 4. *What could have been done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done in it; so Jer. 9. 7. I will melt them and try them, for what shall I do for the daughter of my People: Hos. 6. 4. O Ephraim what shall I do unto thee? O Judah what shall I do unto thee?* God speaketh here as men do when they know not what to do more.

4. *When hereupon God doth cease to work in an ordinary way by ordinary means, and leaves a people to themselves; withdraws his Spirit, his Presence, his Power, his Counsel, his Conduct, his Protection and Benediction, and gives them up to their own wills and wayes, Counsels and Courses, to do what they will with themselves: When God deserts his own work among a people, suffers his own Worship and Ordinances to be ineffectual, if not judicial: When God saith of a People, as of them, Deut. 32. 20. I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end will be; what lamentable evil end they will bring themselves unto; and as Hos. 4. 16. Ephraim is joined to Idols, let him alone: When God appears only as a Stranger in the Land; as a man astounded, a mighty man that cannot Save; Jer. 14. 8. Surely then there is no hope, unless God magnifie his Sovereign Grace in Saving such a People by himself.*

5. When the Interest of the World is Espoused
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and Exalted ; and the Interest of Religion is thereby exposed, deposed and depressed. When the Spirit of Worldliness grows exceeding high and strong, and the Spirit of Religion grows low and weak, weaker and weaker, languishing even unto death ; when the World prevails against, and over Religion, to strike it past ordinary hope of a Resurrection : When the Spirit of the World, is the reigning, governing spirit, and carries all before it ; nothing can be done but in subserviency to it, when it is become the Spirit of the Times ; truly then all kind of Impediments and Obstructions to the Work of God, will become insuperable. All Spiritual Evils, which are most dangerous and destructive, will become irresistible and invincible, and the Work of Reformation, more and more impracticable and impossible, unless God undertake it by himself ; *for when the foundations are thus out of course, or destroyed, what can the Righteous do,* Psa. 11. 3. at such times, and in such cases as these, nothing but Sovereign Grace can Save us.

Which is the last thing in the Doctrine : therefore,

5. It remains to be proved, *That when God thus Saveth his People by himself, it is in Sovereign Mercy ; this is most evident by the instance in our Text ; for when this Promise of*
Salvation

Salvation was made to *Judah*, and much more before it was most signally Accomplisht to them, *Judah* was as bad, yea worse, more wicked than *Israel*, as was hinted before from *Jer. 3. 11.* and is more at large set forth, in *Ezek. 16. 46. &c.* where comparing *Judah* with *Samaria*, God concludes that *Judah* had committed more sins, & more abominable, than *Samaria*; that *Samaria* had not committed half the sins that *Judah* had; yea, that *Judah* was worse than *Sodom*: yet God saith in our Text and Context, *I will no more have mercy upon the House of Israel, but will utterly take them away. But I will have mercy upon the House of Judah, and will Save them by the Lord their God*: this must needs be Sovereign Grace in the glory of it. Thus it appears, That at some times, and in some cases, God doth in Sovereign Mercy Save his people, both from Sin and Judgment, in a more immediate and extraordinary way of working by himself.

I shall pretermitt what might and ought to have been spoken in the Application, by way of Inference, for Instruction, or Admonition; and to proceed to the

EXHORTATION:

Which speaketh in general to all the People and Churches of NEW-ENGLAND; So

far (at least) as they may be spoken unto, and address, in this General Assembly: and it is to Move, Excite and Encourage us, So to approve and apply our selves unto God, as he may be graciously moved to have mercy upon us, and to Save us by the Lord our God; (that is) to Save us in Sovereign Mercy, in a more immediate and extraordinary way of working by himself.

Let not such an Exhortation be thought improper, or impertinent, to N.E. as to think or say within our selves, we hope, *We are not yet come to that lamentable pass, nor reduced to such an extremity, as to be under an extream necessity to implore Sovereign Mercy for our Salvation; we hope our Condition is not yet so hopeless, but that we may hope to be Saved, in the ordinary way of the working of Gods Power and Mercy, by ordinary means; and therefore that it may be too much a scandal and reproach, to be represented otherwise as a people, utterly lost and gone without Sovereign Mercy.* O would to God, it were not so much so, as, upon serious consideration, we may conclude it is; but we must understand, that an Apostatizing People, are most secure, when they are most in danger, Isa 57. 10. *Yet saidest thou not there is no hope, thou hast found the life of thine hand, therefore thou wast not grieved: Observe, an hard-hearted People will never be brought to say,*

say, *there is no hope*, till it be too late ; therefore although I believe, that we are yet a people, as hopeful, as to Salvation, *in the issue*, as any other visible people of God in the World, if not more : (*I say in the issue*) yet those who have any right understanding of our present State, *Frame* and *Way*, must needs acknowledge, *That we have need of present Help and Salvation from God himself, working by himself in Sovereign Mercy* ; and therefore that it is our instant Duty and Concernment, so to approve and apply our selves unto him, as that we may obtain it.

I shall therefore amplify this Exhortation, by shewing :

1. *How it doth appear, that we stand in such present need of Sovereign Mercy.*

2. *How we ought so to approve our selves to God, as that we may be prepared to be made the Subjects of it, and to receive it.*

3. *How we ought so to apply our selves to God for it, as that we may obtain it.*

That we may be sensible, that we have present need of such Salvation from God. We may consider :

1. *Whether we can expect that God should do any more for us in the ordinary way of the working of his Ordinate Power and Mercy, by ordinary means, than he hath already done, to Save us ;* God doth put the Quæry to his People for

Conviction : *What could have been done more, that I have not done? What shall I do for the Daughter of my People? O Ephraim, What shall I do unto thee?* It may not, it cannot be denied, but that God did as much in our first Constitution; (*when he Planted these Heavens, and Laid the Foundation of this Earth, and said to New England, thou art my People*) for Establishment before him, in Faith, Obedience and Perseverance under his Covenant; and in his Kingdom, and to secure us from Defection, and Apostacy from him; as we can say, that ever he hath done for any People these many Ages : Can we say, what God could have done more for us, to Settle us in a stedfast Standing before him, with close, constant adherence to him, then he hath done. He chose us, and set us apart to be a peculiar people to himself; he gave us a Constitution, compleated with all kind of Priviledges, Liberties, and Immunities, both Civil and Religious, which any people could desire, enjoy or improve, unto the promotion of both Holiness and Righteousness, Godliness and Honesty; he gave us a full and compleat standing under his Covenant in his Kingdom, or in Church State : He, gave us his House, with all the Spiritual Furniture and Provision of it, pure Doctrine and Worship, the whole Gospel Ministry, and Ministration;

stration ; the whole Faith and Order of the Gospel, and hath hitherunto kept us in the full Possession, Enjoyment and Improvements of all, with full Freedom, Liberty, Seasons, Opportunities, Advantages, Encouragements, to do any thing, everything, that was necessary for the advancement of Religion, and the interest and work of our *Lord Christ*, and our own Establishment with safety from Apostacy ; he hath granted & continued a special day of Grace, with all possible means of Grace, for the carrying on of the work of Conversion and Edification, and for the progress of all Saving Work, both in Churches and in Families, both in Publick, and in Private : He also *Created a Defence upon all the Glory, and appointed his Salvation for Walls and Bulwarks.* What could we expect, that God could do more for us in the ordinary way of the Improvement of Means ? Well, notwithstanding all this, we have made a woful defection from God ; insomuch, that he may justly upbraid us, as he did them, Deut. 32. 6. *Do ye thus Requite the Lord your God, O foolish people and unwise ! Is not he thy Father, hath not he made thee, and estab isht thee ; Remember the dayes of Old ; ask thy father, and he will shew t thee, thy Elders, and they will tell thee.* Now then, let us further consider, What God could have done more for us, to recover and restore

us, and bring us back again to himself, and this either by his *Word*, or by his *Works*. Let us Consider,

1. *How much, how long, how powerfully God hath laboured with us by his Word, and by his Spirit therein.* It hath been his great Work, by the Ministry of his Word, to awaken, convince and humble us for our Sins, by charging, judging, condemning, threatening, denouncing very dreadfully against us for them, by such of his Servants whom he commanded to cry aloud, and not to spare, to lift up their voices like Trumpets, in testifying and crying against those Sins, and ways of sinning; especially those *Heaven affrighting, astonishing Sins*, whereby we have so far exchanged our Glory, for that which profiteth not; (that is) Our God for the World, as Jer. 2 11, 12, 13. Also God hath by his Word, plainly proposed and pressed all the general Duties of the Times; wherein the work of *Reformation* doth consist; and wherein he hath called us with utmost importunity, to turn unto him; moving of us by all his most gracious Promises, of all kinds of Salvations; and all this, with infinite Patience and Long Suffering, from One Generation to another; as Neh. 9. 30. *Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy Spirit in the Prophets, yet would they not give ear; and Zech. 7. 17. But they*

they refused to hearken, and pulled away the Shoulder, and stopped their Ears, that they should not hear; yea, they made their hearts like an Adamant Stone, lest they should hear; and from thenceforth, God gave them up to Sin and Judgment, Plal. 81. 11. But my people would not hearken to my voice, Israel would have none of me: By rejecting of his Word, they rejected God himself; therefore it follows, So I gave them up to their own hearts Lusts, to walk after their own counsels: O that my People had hearkened unto me, I should soon have subdued their Enemies, &c. From thenceforth the Word of God became Judicial to them, Isa. 6. 10. Go make the heart of this people fat; make their ears heavy, shut their eyes; Lest they should Convert and be healed: God set them under an Hardening, Soul-killing Dispensation of his Word, Hos. 6. 5. Therefore I have bewed them by the Prophets, I have slain them by the words of my mouth. Truly, we may with fear and trembling, consider how generally ineffectual, the Ministry of the Word hath been with us, as to any general work of Conversion and Reformation, and is yet like to be; seeing that we cannot say what God could have done more for us thereby, in an ordinary way of working, to recover us, and reduce us to himself; So that our Lord may complain of us, as sometime he did of them in
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the person of the Prophet, Isa. 49. 4. *I have Laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for naught and in vain.* But,

2. *Can we say, what God should further do further for us by his Works, to reform and save us; and that either by his Mercies or by his Judgments; and all hitherunto in vain.*

1. *Consider how much, and how long God hath Laboured with us in a way of mercy; he hath multiplied all kinds, both of Temporal and Spiritual Mercies upon us; the richest, rarest, choicest, peculiar mercies, the most alluring, obliging mercies, even loving kindneses and tender mercies; and if we had rightly improved them, they would have been Saving Mercies; he hath wonderfully magnified all his Mercies to us; in that they have been granted upon our Cries to him, in the times and cases of our greatest extremity; and continued unto us notwithstanding our great unworthiness, and manifold abuses of them; they have been in all respects very signal Mercies, whereby God hath been drawing of us with the Cords of a man, the Bands of Love; Hos. 11. 4. But, Oh how have we abused all these Mercies, to Pride, Carnal Confidence, Hardness of Heart, Presumption, Security, Sensuality; so that we may fear, they have been hardening, and so Judicial Mercies, granted not in Saving Mercy, but in Judgment.*

2. *Consider*

2. Consider we further, how much, and how long God hath been Labouring with us in a way of Judgment, to reform and save us; he began his Process with us by lighter afflictions, in a way of Chastisement and Correction; he began with the Rod, but that not availing, he Entered into Judgment, drew the Sword; and proceeded therein gradually, according as our sins have arisen to higher and higher degrees of Transgression and Provocation; so God hath heightened the Severity of his Executions, and that unto a great consumption of our small people, both by the Sword, and by the Sicknets, and otherwise, wasting, weakening and consuming of us; carrying on his whole Process in such a way, as that we have been convinced and forced to confess, that his whole gracious design, thereby hath been to reform; as it is alwayes with his People, Lev. 26. 23. *If ye will not be reformed by these things, &c.* and the main issue of the whole Process, is to humble and reform them, verse 41. *If then thine uncircumcised heart be humbled, and thou accept of the punishment of thine Iniquity, then will I remember my Covenant.* But may not God yet complain of us, as he did of them, Jer. 44. 10. *They are not humbled unto this day.* May we not fear, that we are rather hardened than humbled, as they, Zeph. 3. 7. *I said surely they will fear me, they will receive*
Instruction

Instruction ; but they rose up early, and corrupted all their doings : We are under many fearful Symptoms of being hardened, and not humbled, by all past Judgments, that we are rather the worse than the better for them, as they, Isa. 1. 5, 6. Why should ye be stricken any more, ye will revolt more and more ; the whole head is sick, the whole heart faint, &c. and truly it so, we may dread that fearful Sentence, Jer. 6. 29, 30. the Bellows are burnt, the Lead is consumed of the Fire, the Founder melteth in vain, for the wicked are not taken away, reprobate Silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them : Again,

3. Consider, *How much and how long God hath been proving and trying of us, both by his Word, and by his Works, both by his Mercies and his Judgments ; and indeed by all kind of merciful Probations ; to see whether we would repent and reform, as he did his people of old, Deut. 8. 2. to humble thee, and to prove thee, and to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldst keep his Commandments or no ; verse 16. That he might humble thee, and prove thee, to do thee good in the latter end ; truly so it is, God hath been many wayes, every way proving and trying of us, and that with much patience and long-suffering, waiting upon us to see how we would approve our selves unto him ; it may be said of this or that time, and of*

of this or that State and Condition ; then and therein God tried and proved them ; as *Exod. 15. 25. there he proved them*, he proved them at *Massab*, *Deut. 33. 6.* and he proved them at *Meribah*, *Psal. 81. 7.* truly so hath God been trying and proving *New-England*. It is very easie to Instance, when and how : But alas, we have not understood it, we do not, we will not understand it ; and therefore it is that we have so wofully miscarried and misapproved our selves under all Divine Probations ; so that all those merciful Probations, slighted, neglected and abused, have only made further discoveries of our Stubbornness, and utter averfeness to turn to God ; and so our Probations have issued in nothing, but the further Aggravation of our Sin and Provocation of Gods Wrath, by tempting of him. All the while God was proving of them in the Wilderness, they were trying and proving of him to provoke him ; as *Psal. 95. 8. Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the Wilderness, when your fathers tempted me, and proved me, and saw my works.* All these things considered, what can we expect that God should do more in an ordinary way of working for our Salvation ; and what hope of Salvation, but by the Lord our God himself in Sovereign Grace ?

2. To make us yet more sensible of our need of such Salvation : We may consider *Whether we our selves shall be able to do any more for our selves, to Reform and Save our selves, than we have done.* We are convinced there is no hope of Salvation without Reformation, and accordingly we have been stirred to labour it in that way, by the visible improvement of all means which we have had ; all External helps, advantages & encouragements, unto it, both from Civil Authority (at least) by making all kind of Reforming Laws ; as also, and (more especially) by the *Power and Authority of Christ*, and that in the highest way of Ministerial Exercise thereof, by the Churches in Synods ; declaring and testifying in the Name of Christ against all those evils, which are the radical, and are likely to prove the fatal causes of our defection : & laying open the whole way and work of Reformation, and proposing Expedients, together with Solemn Admonitions to the People and Churches to Repent and Reform, and that upon Peril of destruction, if we do not. In pursuance of which we have with Extraordinary visible Solemnity, transacted with God, and one with another, and therein laid our selves under most Sacred & very awful Obligations, by renewed Covenant engagements to God in Solemn manner, with Fasting, Prayer and Humiliation ; wherein we have
promised

promised, vowed, professed and protested unto him our most sincere purposes and resolutions, by his Grace, to forsake our sins, and to turn unto him with all our hearts and with all our Souls unfeignedly ; and this we have been doing, until (we may fear) that we have wearied our God, as well as our selves by our gross Formalities: for so God speaks of their highest formal performances, Isa. i. 13, 14-----
Incense is an Abomination to me --Your New Moons, and appointed feasts my Soul hateth, they are a trouble to me, I am weary to bear them. It remains then a fearful question ; Whether we have not by all this Aggravated our sins, and further accumulated Divine wrath upon our selves ? for when a People *Flatter him with their lips, and ly unto him with their tongues, their hearts being not right with him ;* It provokes him to *Jealousy* and to *Abhorrency*, Psal. 78. 36 59. God seems to Express himself as more grieved and provoked with the Formality, Hypocisy and Treachery of Judah, in their highest Re-formations, even that in Josiahs time, than with the Idolatry of Israel, & it hastned destruction upon them ; Jer. 3. 10, 11. *And yet for all this her treacherous Sister Judah hath not turned to me with her whole heart but feignedly (or in falsehood) saith the Lord ; and the Lord said unto me, backsliding Israel, hath justified her self more than treacherous Judah.* What real hope is there then

then left, that we shall be able to doe any thing more for our selves, to accomplish our own Reformation and Salvation : Have we not cause then to bemoan our selves before and unto God, as the Church, Jer. 3.23.25. *Truly in vain is Salvation hoped for from the Hills &c. Truly in the Lord our God is the Salvation of Israel : Shame hath devoured the Labours of our Fathers, We ly down in our Shame, that our Confusion may cover us :* and as Jer.31.19. *I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus--- Turn thou me and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God.* Thus we have heard how it doth appear that we stand in present extream need of such Salvation by God himself in Sovereign Mercy.

I Proceed,

2 To shew, how we ought so to approve our selves to God as that we may be prepared to be the Subjects of such Salvation as this :

And to this end,

1. We must Labour unto a right and full understanding, and an humbling, heart breaking sense of our own State and Condition, that we may lay it deeply to heart. It was the ruine of Gods People, that would never be made to understand, nor lay to heart, of which God complain, Isa. 1. 3. *Israel doth not know, my People doth not consider ;* and yet it was at such a time, wherein the whole head was sick, and the whole

whole heart faint; from the sole of the foot to the head, there was nothing but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores, which had not been closed, nor bound up, nor mollified with Oyntment: Yet even then they did not Know nor Consider what their Condition was; so Isa. 42. 25. It set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; it consumed him, yet he laid it not to heart; therefore they could not be Saved, because they would not lay it to heart, Jer. 12. 11. The whole Land is Desolate, because no man layeth to heart: Surely, there is very little sign of any laying to heart in New-England, but the quite contrary; as it was with them, Isa. 22. 12, 13. In that day did the Lord God of Hosts call to weeping and mourning, and baldness, and girding with Sackcloth; and behold joy and gladness, slaying of Oxen, and killing of Sheep, eating flesh, and drinking Wine. It was revealed in mine ear by the Lord of Hosts, Surely this Iniquity shall not be purged from you, till ye die. God grant that New-England may never incur this dreadful Sentence. We are much in the Luddiccan State and Frame; conceited that we are rich, and increased with Goods, and know not that we are poor and blind, & wretched & miserable, & naked, Rev. 3. 17. It is the great thing that God is labouring to bring us to, that we may understand and lay to heart, Deut. 32. 29. O that they were wise, that they understood these things,

things, that they would consider their Latter End.

2. We must utterly renounce all carnal confidence in our selves, or in any arm of Flesh ; especially those carnal confidences, which we are most apt unto, and which are most dangerous ; those carnal confidences in our visible Covenant-relation to God , in our visible Church-State, the visible Priviledges, Interests and Enjoyments of the House of God ; to cry as they, Jer. 7. 4. *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord.* Carnal Confidence in our own Faith, and Prayer, is yet more dangerous to think as they spake, Isa. 58. 3. *Wherefore have we fasted say they, and thou seest not, and afflicted our Souls, and thou takest no knowledge ?* It is divers ways too evident, that we have abused our Faith and Prayer too much, to carnal confidence ; but that which is most dangerous and destructive, is, carnal confidence in God himself, Mic. 3. 11. *Yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, is not the Lord among us, none evil can come upon us ; therefore shall Zion for your sakes be plowed like a field :* If ever we hope to be Saved in Sovereign Mercy by the Lord our God himself, we must away with all our carnal confidences, and Pray as the Church, Hos. 14. 3. *Take away Iniquity, and receive us graciously --- Ashur shall not Save us ; --- for in thee the fatherless find mercy.* We must become as fatherless ; then
God

God promifeth, as ver. 4. *I will heal their Backslidings, I will love them freely; we must become a poor and an afflicted people, Zeph. 3. 11, 12. For then I will take away out of the midst of thee, them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty, because of my Holy Mountain: I will leave in the midst of thee, an afflicted and poor people; and then it follows ver. 15. The Lord hath taken away thy Judgments, he hath cast out the Enemy; ver. 17. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee, is mighty, he will Save: When God seeth that all power is gone, and that there is none shut up nor left; then they are prepared for Salvation in Sovereign Mercy, Deut. 32. 36. When a people speak trembling, and out of the dust, that is, out of a depth of Humiliation, then they are prepared for this Sovereign Mercy, Hos. 13. 1.*

3. *We must Labour to understand what it is to be Saved by the Lord our God; what it is that God must work both in us, and for us, to Save us: what Salvation is, what our own Saving Good and Welfare is; ignorance of this doth make a people incapable of Salvation, Hosea 11. 3. They knew not that I healed them; this Ignorance was that which our Lord lamented with tears, weeping over Jerusalem, Luke 19. 41. If thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day, the things of thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes. God grant that*

this may not be verified on *New-England*, of which there are very sad signs; we must therefore set our hearts upon that which is and will be our Salvation; and without which there can be no Salvation; (*viz.*) the powerful progress of the Word, Worship and Work of God; the Conversion of our People, the Reformation of our Churches, the Resurrection of Religion: O if our hearts were set upon these things, we should be heartily willing to be Saved, earnestly desirous to be Saved; and if we were so, God would soon Save us; *Isa. 1. 19. If ye be willing: But so it is, an Apostatizing People do practically refuse to be Saved, Isa. 30. 15. For thus saith the Lord, in returning and in rest shall ye be Saved, in quietness and confidence shall be your Strength; and ye would not, but ye said no &c. Jer. 2. 25. but thou saidst, there is no hope we have loved Strangers, and after them we will go; This also our Lord laments, Mat. 23. 37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem; how often would I have gathered thy Children, and ye would not; behold your house is left unto you desolate. God never destroyes his people, but they wilfully refuse to be Saved; truly our wilfulness in those ways of sinning, which are the direct and broad way to destruction; is fearfully signified to us: God hath been healing of us, and we will not be healed, we will not be Saved from*

our sins, but seem to be the more resolute in them, *Hos. 7. 1. When I would have healed Israel, then the Iniquity of Ephraim, & the wickedness of Samaria, was discovered*; truly that the sins of the times with us, not only continue but prevail more & more; notwithstanding all, that God hath been doing to Save us from them, is matter of fearful consideration to us, and deep Humiliation, to all who have any sense of the State and Condition of our People and Churches: O that we knew what it is to be Saved.

4. We must submit and commit our selves unto God, with a practical acknowledgment of, and subjection unto his absolute Sovereignty, as also to the Supremacy of his Wisdom and Will; that whatsoever he doth, it is good, yea, it is best in it self, and as he doth it; and without giving of him the glory of all that he doth to us or for us, or with us, whether in mercy or in Judgment, with an absolute submission to his Sovereign Will and Pleasure, and an humble resolution to bear and indure whatsoever he shall please to inflict; be willing he should take any course with us to Save us; without acknowledging our unworthiness of such Salvation; thus the people, *Judg. 10. 15. We have sinned, do with us what seemeth good to thee, deliver us only we pray thee this day*: Observe here how they Implore Sovereign Mercy for their

Salvation; and cast themselves into the arms of it; and it follows, ver. 16. *his Soul was grieved for the misery of Israel; and so instantly Saved them by himself.* -

5. *We must arise and set to work for God; with utmost labour, diligence, zeal, courage, faithfulness, with all our hearts and Souls, with all our might and strength, with a most sincere and fervent love to the work of God, and an heart, care, and concernment for it; as long as we sit still, and slight and neglect and desert the Work of God; running every man to his own house, as they, Hag. 1. 9. that is, giving up our selves to the World, and Worldliness; so long as all seek their own things and not the things which are Jesus Christs,* Phil. 2. 21. *I say, so long as it is thus, there is no hope that God will work for us in such an extraordinary way of Salvation; But if we will arise and work for, and with God, God will arise, and work for, and with us; Hag. 2. 4, 5. Now be strong O Zerubbabel, and be strong, O Joshua, and be strong all ye people of the Land, and work, for I am with you, and my Spirit remaineth among you, fear not. Observe, if we will work, God will be with us, and carry on all Saving Work for us by his Spirit. Falseness, Unfaithfulness, Unstedfastness in the Work of God, doth render us not only unworthy*

unworthy and unfit, but utterly incapable of such Salvation.

6. *We must bearken most intensely and effectually*, subjecting our very Souls to the Word of God; which is the highest means of the working of Divine Wisdom, Power, Grace and Mercy in all Saving Work for the Children of men: Yea, and in working all kind of Salvations for the Church and People of God. The whole glorious work of Salvation out of Egypt, was wrought by the Word, Hos. 12. 13. *By a Prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a Prophet he preserved them*; by the Ministry of his Word he Saved them out of their Apostacy, and the Calamity of the Babylonish Captivity; as appears by the whole History of Ezra and Nehemiah, and the Prophecies of Zechariah and Haggai; and by the Ministry of the Word, the great and last Salvation for the Church shall be wrought; Isa. 52. 6, 7. *How beautiful upon the Mountains are the feet of him, that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth Salvation, that saith to Zion thy God reigneth.* Our Lord also prophesieth the same, Mat. 23. 39. *For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord: Surely, it was by the Ministry of the Word, that God wrought gloriously for New-England, in giving*

of us our Being, as his People. It is by the Ministry of his Word that he upholds and carries on the work of Conversion, and thereby upholds his Churches in their Spiritual Being and Constitution, and Religion in them; and therefore it must be by the Ministry of his Word, that that Work, and these Churches and Religion which are now sinking and dying, must be recovered and revived, by a thorough Saving Reformation. It is by the power of the Word, that God makes Mercies and Judgments, and all other Providential Dispensations, even all his wayes and works unto his people saving; nothing will do us good, till God work by his Word, to make all effectual. It is by his Word, that he doth lead and guide his people into, and in the way of Salvation: It is by his Word that he removes all obstructions, subdues all opposition; that the *great Mountains before Zerubbabel, become a Plain*, Zech. 4. 7. It is by his Word that he doth stir up, and strengthen all Instruments, quicken, sanctifie and spirit all his Servants to his work. O when God comes to Save *New-England* by himself, we shall see and feel wonderful effects & changes wrought by the Ministry of the Word; and when once our hearts are fully & generally subjected to the power of the Word, then we may be assured, that God is arisen, and at work
for

for us in a glorious way of Salvation by himself; then we shall be prepared to be the Subjects of such Salvation: When our hearts tremble under the power of the Word, as it was with them, when God was at work with them, to reform them, Ezra 9. 4. *Then were assembled to me, every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel;* and again, Ezra 10. 3. *According to the counsel of my Lord, and of those that tremble at the Commandment of our God: God would do nothing for them till they did thus subject themselves to his Word,* Zech. 7. 7. *Should ye not hear the words which the Lord hath cried by the voice of the former Prophets, whilst Jerusalem was inhabited.* Surely God expects that New-England should hear and obey those many solemn words which he hath cried to them by the voice of the former Prophets, as well as those which he is still crying unto us by the present Ministry, and this we must do before we can upon any grounds of Faith and Hope, expect that God should Save us by himself: Thus we ought to approve our selves unto God.

I Proceed,

3. To shew how we ought to apply our selves to God for such Salvation; and this I need not tell you, we all know it must be by Faith and Prayer.

1. By Faith, and it must be Pure Faith, without

without the least mixture or tincture of carnal Confidence, Presidence or Diffidence ; and our Faith must work under a most humbling sense of our sins and of our unworthiness, and of our own utter insufficiency to help our selves, and our present Extream necessity of help from God, and from God alone, and that with a full reliance and recumbence upon him, and an high and strong Confidence in him for such Salvation ; with an humble and yet firm dependence upon his Infinite Sufficiency, and his Sovereign Grace and Mercy ; and with an hopeful, patient, earnest, instant Expectation, looking, longing, waiting and watching for him in this way of Salvation. Thus we must believe by Faith, Asserting our Covenant interest in him and relation unto him as our God, the God of our Salvation ; as the Church *Isa. 25.9. Lo this is our God, we have waited for him, he will save us ; this is the Lord we have waited for him, we will rejoyce and be glad in his Salvation.*

2. *With such an exercise of Faith we are to apply unto God by Prayer :* for such Faith works most powerfully and effectually, by Prayer ; and is ever prevalent with God, never fails, but ever obtains help from God ; but then we must pray indeed, Pray in good earnest, with utmost Sincerity, Fervency, Instancy, Importunity, labouring therein even unto an Agony :
not

not only cry, but cry mightily, with an out-cry of Prayer, as a People ready to perish : as the Children of Israel at the Red-Sea ; *Exod. 14. 10. The People of Israel Cryed out to the Lord.* Truly we are now concerned to Pray as for our Lives ; yea much more than for our own Lives, by the utmost improvement of all Arguments of Faith and Hope in pleading with God : Striving as it were once for all ; resolving with Wrestling *Jacob*, that through his Grace, and by his own strength, we will *Hold him, and not let him go* till we obtain ; as Remembering that we are Praying and Crying for Sovereign Mercy ; and being sensible, that not only the eternal concernments of our own Souls, but that all the Saving concernments of our Churches and People, and of all Posterity : that our very being and standing before God under his Covenant, in his Kingdom as his People : Yea that all the concernments of Gods own Cause, Interest, Name and Glory, with us, have great dependance upon the success of our Prayers at this time : God hath been labouring long to make *New-England* cry. God doth Expect & Wait to hear us cry to him, as *Jer. 3. 14. Wilt thou not at this time cry to me, my Father, thou art the guide of my youth : &c* he hath promised that he will be very gracious to the Voice of our cry, that when he doth hear it, he will answer, *Isa. 30. 19.* Truly it is much to be feared, that

New-

New-England doth not yet know what it is to cry ; that is with Lamenting, Bemoaning, Bewailing, Deploring, Mournful, Penitential Crys of Prayer ; although there are a Praying People yet left with us, those who are Gods Remembrancers, who stand before him in the Gap. But alas, how much of the Spirit, Life and Power of Prayer, is decayed and wanting, among People and Professors, in Publick, Private & Secret ; and how much we have failed and falsified with God in our Prayers : We have sad cause to Consider, O that there might be such a General, Powerful cry of Prayer as sometimes there hath been with us ; and as God now expects and looks for, and which is absolutely necessary, as the way and means wherein we are to seek and labour to obtain this Salvation from God : God hath therefore promised, that his People shall pray, *Jer. 29. 11, 12. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall goe and Pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you, and yee shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart :* This is a promise that then they should Pray when the time of Salvation was come. God alwayes Saves his People in the way of Prayer, *Jer. 31. 9. They shall come with Weeping and with Supplication will I lead them.* Oh that God would pour out the Spirit of Grace & Supplication upon us !

But

But it may be inquired, *What we are more especially and particularly to Believe and Pray for, in order to the Obtainment of such Salvation?*

I Reply, *It must be for the returns and continuance of the Divine Presence, and the accomplishment of the Promise of the Spirit.*

1. *That God would no further or longer withdraw himself; His Spiritual, Gracious & Saving Presence, but return to us in those ways and by those degrees wherein and whereby he hath been departing from us: We have yet all the visible signs and means of his presence, that ever we had, or any People can have: But alas, how much have we lost of the Spiritual Beauty, Glory, Power, Saving Effects, and Blessedness of his presence, and of the comfortable Beatifical Apprehensions of his presence in Spiritual Communion with him and communications from him. God is much with-drawn from our hearts, and from his own Houle; much of the Protecting, Directing, Prospering, Propitious presence of God, in the wayes of his Providence gone. And truly the Divine presence seems still to be upon its remove from us; & we & our People seem to be very little sensible of it, and growing more insensible & unconcerned about it: surely then it is high time for us to stir up our selves to take hold of God: we may complain with the Church, Isa. 64. 7. There is none that call upon thy Name,*
that

that stirreth up himself, to take hold of thee, for thou hast hid thy face from us and consumed us : *Hof. 10.12.* It is time to seek the Lord till he come ; that is till he return. Truly, Wo will be to us, if we suffer God to depart quite away from us ! *Hof. 9.12.* It was therefore the burthen of the Churches Prayer, *Psa. 80. 3. 7. 19.*... Cause thy face to shine upon us and we shall be Saved : More plainly Expressed, Verse 14. Return O Lord we beseech thee. When ever God Saves his People, he returns ; and when ever he returns, he brings Salvation with him, *Zech. 1. 16.* I am returned to Jerusalem with great Mercies.

2. We must believe and pray for the accomplishment of the great Promise of the Spirit. It was intimated before, that God works more immediately to Save his People by his Spirit ; they therefore can expect no such Salvation, otherwise then by the accomplishment of that Promise of the Spirit ; which indeed seems to be a Fundamental Article of the Covenant of Grace ; because it is by the performance of that he brings his People into Covenant with himself, and applies all the Saving Grace of the Covenant unto them, and so thereby he becomes their God, and makes them his People ; therefore it is so often in express terms given and renewed in the Scripture, both of the Old and New Testament, as *Isa. 44. 1, 6.* *Isa. 59. 20, 21.* *Ezek. 36. 27.* *Ezek. 37. 14.* *Ezek.*

Ezek. 39. 29. Joel 2. 28. and elsewhere abundantly ; which signifies, that God hath laid this Promise of his Spirit in the foundation of the Faith, Hope and Confidence of his People; and that the accomplishment of it, is the great thing which they are to believe and pray for, in order to their Salvation ; and therefore he hath directed his Church to wait upon him for Salvation, until he pour out his Spirit, Isa. 32. 15. *Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the Wilderness become a fruitful field.* There were gracious Promises of Salvation made to the Church in that Context ; but they were to wait for it, until the Spirit was poured upon them from on high : It all depended upon the accomplishment of the Promise of the Spirit. We have (it may be) sometimes thought and hoped, that we had seen God working in the way of his Providence, at this time, and at that, for our Salvation ; and we have been apt to be much raised in our Spirits with what we have so thought God hath been doing for us, and that with very high hopes of being suddenly and perfectly restored to as good and happy condition as ever. But alas ! do we see, do we feel God working by the power of his Spirit ? Truly, if not, whatever other Signs or Prognosticks of good we may think we see, we may assure our selves, that all such hopes and confidences

confidences will fail us, and we shall be left
 to complain with the Church, Jer. 14. 19. *We
 looked for peace, but no good hath come, for a time
 of healing, and behold trouble; and as Isa. 59. 9,
 11. We wait for light, and behold obscurity, for
 brightness, but we walk in darkness:--- We looked
 for Judgment, but there is none, for Salvation,
 but it is far from us.* Thus it will be, so long
 as God doth withhold and suspend the Dis-
 pensation of the Spirit, which is of all other,
 the most humbling consideration of our pre-
 sent state and condition; and therefore, if we
 hope that God should ever have mercy upon
New-England, and Save us by himself; we
 must labour, our very Souls must labour, by
 Faith in Prayer, for the accomplishment of the
 Promise of the Spirit. It is by the accom-
 plishment of this Promise, that God doth ac-
 complish all other Promises and Prophecies al-
 so to his Church, referring to their Salvation:
 Yea, it is by the accomplishment of this Pro-
 mise of the Spirit, that he doth accomplish all
 his most great and Glorious Works in the
 World, referring more directly to his own
 Kingdom, Name and Glory. O may we ob-
 tain this Dispensation of the Spirit, then his
 will be filled with his Spirit; whereby the
 Ministry and Ministration of it will be made
 mighty and powerful, as the *Rod of Christs
 Strength sent out of Zion*, and we shall be made

a willing people in such a day of his Power, Psal. 110. 2, 3. Then all Ordinances shall be filled with the Spirit, and so become, powerful and effectual unto the most full and abundant communication of all saving grace and blessing; represented in the Vision of the Candlestick, by the two living, growing, Olive Trees or Branches; distilling the Golden Oyl into the Pipes; signifying, the Spirit powerfully working for the communication of Grace & Blessing, by the Administration of Ordinances; therefore the Vision was expounded by the Promise of the Spirit, Zech. 4. 6. Also God by filling his Word and Ordinances with his Spirit, will fill his Churches with his Spirit; & then we shall see the Churches spirited unto Church Reformation; and so flourishing again with all Spiritual Prosperity: the Promise, it is primarily made unto the Churches; by the accomplishment of which, God will also fill all his Servants, (betrusted with the management of the affairs of his People and Churches) with his Spirit. Yea, all his people will be graciously influenced by his Spirit, unto extraordinary Ability and Activity in his Service. O that we may thus believe and pray effectually, that God would, *Pour out his Spirit upon all Flesh*, according to his Promise, Joel 2. 28, 29. Especially respecting the saving gifts & graces of it, in a general work of Conversion, where-

in more especially it is that God works more immediately, to Save his People by himself, and which is, the only true and real Salvation. And when God thus pours out his Spirit upon his People and Churches, he works also in an extraordinary way, and manner, by his Spirit, in the ways and works of his Providence, especially with reference to his Church; which is held forth to us, in that Visional Scheme of Divine Providence, Ezek. 1. *By the Spirit of the Living Creatures, and the Wheeles, and the Throne, and the appearance of a man upon it;* signifying, our Lord Christ, in the Administration of his Providential Kingdom, by the working of his Spirit in the Dispensations of Providence; a more glorious appearance of which, will be seen in approaching accomplishments. Hence we proceed to the

2 Exhortation: *Which is to Excite us to believe, apply and improve this great Promise, that God will have mercy upon New-England, and Save us by himself.* Not by might, nor by power, but by his Spirit, and that in a way of Sovereign Grace; this seems to be the only hopeful way that we have left, wherein God calls us to wait upon him for Salvation. O therefore that we may obtain grace so to believe, apply and improve this Promise, and thereby enter into this most sure and happy way of Salvation. Therefore

1. I take leave humbly to propose this Exhortation, unto those who are, or may be our Rulers, together with the Representatives of the People in this General Assembly. Right Honourable, much Honoured and Respected, Suffer your selves to be intreated, in the Name of the Lord, and by this Word of the Lord; to undertake, and carry on your whole work, in the Administration of Government, both by Legislation and Execution, and in the management of all the great Affairs of the Publick Weal of this People of God, which you are by him betruſted withal, by a very powerful exerciſe of Faith, in this great Promise, that God will have mercy upon this his People, and Save them, by the Lord their God: This is the Word of the Lord to you, as it was to Zerubbabel, the Governour of Judah; Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit ſaith the Lord of Hoſts. It remains as ſure a foundation of Faith to you, as it was to him: Thoſe whom God made Rulers and Deliverers of his People; eſpecially in times and caſes of Difficulty and Danger; they are Chronicled in Holy Writ, for mighty men of Faith, according to the Apoſtles Induction, Heb. 11. Moſes, Gideon, Barak, Sampſon, Jeſſha, David, Samuel; to whom we may add, Joſhua, Ezra, Nehemiah, Zerubbabel: Theſe all carried on their mighty works, for the Salvation of Gods People, by Faith; and therefore were ſtyled Saviours,

Neb. 9. 7. According to thy manifold mercies, thou gavest them Saviours, who Saved them. If God shall so spirit You unto believing, we shall be comfortably perswaded, if not assured, that he will make you such Saviours, and Save us by your means : The present State of our People, in this difficult, distressing conjuncture of time and affairs, doth require the extraordinary exercise and improvement of your Faith in God, according to this promise ; nothing can be done effectually by you for our Salvation without it ; every thing will be savingly performed by it. May you, by the Exercise of Faith in Prayer, obtain the accomplishment of this Promise to your selves ; you shall by an inexpressible Experiment, feel the Spirit of God coming upon you, moving and actuating of you, by the more immediate influences of his Divine Wisdom, Power and Grace, in all Service unto God, and his People, in your several places, and that with a sincere and single respect, to his Glory, and our good, which is the highest good and end of all Government. And then you shall be stirred up & strengthened, to set your selves, with an high and holy zeal and courage, in the *Strength and Power of the Spirit of God*, against all the most powerful, dangerous and destructive Sins and Evils of the Times. The Spirit of God shall by you, *Lift up a Standard against them* ; now they are breaking

king in upon us *like a Flood*. It appears by Scripture Instances, that it is Gods way to Save his People from their Sins, by the power *and working of his Spirit, in and by Religious Rulers*, as well as in and by his Word, & *seldome otherwise*. In the power of the Spirit also, you shall labour effectually to recover, uphold and advance Religion, by promoting Holiness and Righteousness, in all the wayes of it; that so we may live quiet and peaceable lives in all Godliness and Honesty. Much Honoured, I do with all humble Importunity, Pray & Beseech you, to suffer this word of Exhortation. It will be your highest honour, as well as happiness in your Station, to Subserve so immediately by the Spirit unto God himself, when he comes to Save his People by himself. The first *New-England* Magistracy, under whose Conduct, God led his People into this Land; by Faith obtained this Promise of the Spirit; and being extraordinarily (even divinely) Spirited, both in the undertaking and progress of that glorious work, unto an happy consummation, in Setting up Churches, Worship, Ordinances, and the Spiritual Kingdom of Christ here. May it therefore be your highest, and very holy ambition, to be (through the power and assistance of the Spirit) Repairers and Restorers of that work, and of these Churches thereby unto their primitive beauty and holiness;

ness; & that more especially at such a time, wherein God seems to be arisen unto an extraordinary way of working, in preparation unto great Accomplishments for his Churches and People in the World. Herein you shall not only be graciously *accepted*, but gloriously *Rewarded*; for if God thus improve you, and you thus approve your selves unto God, he will *Signalize* his special favour unto you, by making and setting of you as a *Signet* upon his right hand, *Hag. 2. ult.* Then shall we with much joy and thankfulness, acknowledge to his Praise, That he hath given us Rulers *divinely Spirited Just men, fearing God; and that he hath restored unto us our Judges as at the first, and our Counsellors as at the Beginning.*

2. I propose the same word of Exhortation unto my Brethren in the Ministry, and herein I desire first to apply to my self, who am among all the rest most unworthy; & therefore most unmeet in that respect to apply unto you; yet having (through divine patience and mercy) lived to out-live the most of those of the more worthy Servants of Christ, who have been Coætaneous with me, and being one of those Ancient Men yet Surviving,* who have seen the *First Temple, the First House*, in much of its *First Glory*: I mean these Churches, shining with the fulness and splendor of the divine presence, in the beauty of holiness; and who have

have also unhappily seen, the beginning and progress of that defecti on, which hath occasioned the gradual removes of the Glory, and which doth endanger, the dissolution of their Constitution ; therefore I ought to be the more sensible, and deeply affected, & to propose & press the Exhortation the more sensibly and affectionately. Whereby, O that we might be all moved, *to wait earnestly upon God by Faith in Prayer, for the Promise of the Spirit in the more full accomplishment of it to our selves ;* We (tho unworthy) are Servants of our Lord Christ, under peculiar relation unto him, as *the great Prophet, Apostle, Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, the head Minister of this most glorious Gospel Ministry and Ministration ;* who hath engaged himself to his Servants, by many special Promises, of his Presence, Spirit, Power, and Grace, to carry on his own work in their hands, more immediately *by himself,* in respect of which it is said ; *They are Labourers together with God, and to work the work of the Lord,* that which is more peculiarly his ; unto which, no Creature in Heaven or Earth, hath any *Self-sufficiency,* and wherein Paul and Apollos themselves were *nothing ;* and in which the *Excellency of Power, doth alwayes appear to be of God ;* And because it is all Spiritual, Supernatural & Creating Work ; Wherein the Apostle himself, said he, laboured, *with fear & much trembling :*

being : doubtless under awful apprehensions of the more immediate Accesses and Concourses of the Divine Presence and Power : nothing therefore is to be done in it Savingly, but by Divine Sufficiency, engaged by the Spirit, by whom his Servants may be *endued with power from on high, and made able Ministers of the Spirit, the Holy Ghost being sent down from Heaven, together with the Word Preached, by their Ministry.* The means whereby this work is to be carried on, are not Carnal, but *Spiritual and Mighty, only through God* : and so are to be improved only through Faith, that his Servants being full of Faith, may also be full of the Holy Ghost, and of Power. God gave a very powerful, prosperous progress to this glorious work by the *First Old England Ministry in the first New England Churches, which flourished exceedingly thereby.* And God hath graciously upheld it by the succeeding Ministry, though not with like fulness of saving success. Nor without a very sadening, humbling diminution of Saving Grace and Blessing, and a gradual failure of the work of Conversion. The work being therefore attended, with more & more difficulty and discouragement. O how much the more are the poor Servants of Christ concerned to reinforce and strengthen their dependence upon him, by Faith in his Promise, (in all the Promises) of his Spirit for more immediate and extraordinary Assistance, confi-

dering they are called to labour for him in the decaying State of Religion, the declining State of Churches and Christians, with a Back-sliding people, with an hard-hearted, unbelieving, disobedient generation of Sinners, heightning and strengthening themselves in their ways of sinning, multiplying and aggravating all the Sins of the Times, unto an higher and higher degree, both of Transgression and Provocation; and much in danger of falling under that most dreadful Execution of Divine Vindictive Justice upon the Souls of men, by Spiritual Plagues and Judgments. And in all this to stand before, and minister unto, *an angry and departing God, proceeding in a way of Judgment*; and before our Lord Christ, who is so far provoked, as to threaten, to come quickly, to remove the Candlestick out of its place, except we speedily repent, and do the first works: **O** then with how much Soul concern, ought all those who have received this Ministry, to implore divine mercy that they may not faint; but may obtain Faith to persevere, with courage and confidence, under the working of his Power, which may work in them more immediately, and mightily by the Spirit, to furnish them more abundantly with the Spirit and Grace of the Gospel Ministry. That they may speak as the Oracles of God; all that which God would have spoken unto his people, at such a time, and in such a case, which may be most suita-

table, seasonable, powerful and effectual to awaken, convince, admonish, warn, instruct, exhort, humble; to deliver all the Messages, which God doth send, even the *whole burthen of the Word of the Lord*, to bear and receive the *Word from his mouth*, and so to warn the people from him, that they may deliver their own Souls.

O never, never, hath there been so great an incumbency upon any *New-England Ministry*; as upon this Ministry which God hath now raised up: (and through his grace hopefully qualified) to labour with the present rising and standing Generations in these Churches; forasmuch as our *Weal or Wo*, in the issue of Gods Controversy with us, either in Mercy or in Judgment, either in Salvation or Destruction, will have great dependance upon the *successfulness or unsuccessfulness of this Ministry*. If God make this Ministry savingly successful in a general Conversion, *we are Saved*: If God suffer it to be Judicial, *we may tremble with fear, at the thoughts of the issue*; inasmuch as this Ministry seems to be set for the *last Tryal or Probation (at least) of that Generation, with whom God hath been, and is in a way of Judgment* O then, Let us be moved to believe and pray powerfully for such of the Servants of Christ, who are *just now Entred or Entring upon the Work of the Ministry*; and who are to labour therein, under every *dark and doubtful*

doubtful Dispensations, not knowing what God will do with his People and Churches here. Oh, who may Survive or live to see the issues and events, either in Salvation, or otherwise? I say, Let us Believe and Pray for them, that they may lay out themselves, their very Hearts and Souls in every part of their work: and that their Ministry may be savingly successful; and themselves eminently Subservient, to a Glorious Salvation by the Lord our God Himself, in a way of Sovereign Grace.

To Conclude,

3 I propose this Exhortation, *To all the believing Praying People of God with us.* O believe and pray; Improve this great promise by Faith in Prayer, That God may have mercy upon *New-England*, and Save us by himself in a way of Sovereign Grace. It is high time thus to believe and pray: and to this end,

1. **We must** take heed, that we do not presume upon Sovereign Grace, which we are apt and (I fear we begin) to doe: We must therefore remember that God hath not by his Covenant absolutely ingaged the absolute sufficiency of his Sovereign Grace for the Salvation of his people; but he hath ingaged himself only according to the Ordinate & Ordinary working of his Grace and Mercy, to a repenting, believing, obedient, reforming People. God is not wont to Save an hard hearted, Impenitent, un-
believing,

believing, disobedient People continuing in their sins, slighting, neglecting, abusing & rejecting ordinary mercy offered to them : I say, God is not wont to Save such a People by Sovereign Grace ; he doth seldome (if ever) supersede this course & process of his with such a People by Sovereign Mercy ; he doth rarely Save such a Generation who have first provoked him to enter into Judgment, by Sovereign Mercy. It is therefore dangerous to presume upon Sovereign Grace.

2. We must remember also, that the promise of Sovereign Mercy is made only to Mourners, to a People brought down to such a depth & degree of mourning & humiliation, that their Spirits, their Hearts, their Souls, are ready to faint & fail within them ; so expressly in the text of that promise, *Isa. 57. 16. 18. With him also who is of an humble & contrite Spirit, to revive &c. For I will not contend for ever... for the Spirit should fail before, and the Soul which I have made. I have seen his ways & I will heal him, I will restore comfort to him and to his mourners, &c.* Truly we must Expect that God will make New-England Mourn, until our Spirits, our Hearts be ready to faint within us ; before he will Save us by Sovereign Grace : with these cautions all the sincere People of God, in the Land, may & ought to set themselves to believe & pray with confidence & comfort for the accomplishment of

of this glorious promise of Salvation : and have not good but great encouragement so to doe, for as much as,

1. Though our condition respecting our sins and Gods wrath & Judgment, for them, be very dangerous, yet it is not desperate ; there is always hope for the People of God : When there is not any, no not the least or most remote appearance of hope, from man or means, either Ordinary or Extraordinary ; Yea though there may be all the most prodigious signs & formidable appearances, and inevitable approaches of destruction both by Sin and Judgment : Yet still there is hope in God, and he would have his People to understand it, *Isa. 4. 27. Why sayest thou O Jacob and speakest O Israel, my way is hid from the Lord, and my Judgment passed over from my God, hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that God, the everlasting God the Lord, fainteth not nor his weary &c.* Yea God encourageth his People to hope in their most desperate cases, *Jer 31. 16, 17. Thus saith the Lord refrain thy voice from Weeping and thine eyes from tears, for there is hope in thine end : Jer. 29. 11. I know the thoughts that I think towards thee, thoughts of peace & not of evil to give you an expected end.* God sometimes gives his People, *The Valley of Achor for a door of hope, Hos. 2. 15* Opens to them a door of hope in the greatest depth of distress : There is always Hope in Israel, in the most desperate case, *Ezra 10. 2. Yea NOW there is hope in Israel concerning this thing.*

2. That we have not only hope, but a sure Foundation of Faith & Confidence in God for Salvation (viz.) His Covenant and all his promises, whereby we are assured, that he is not only able, but graciously Willing

ling to Save us : reserving to himself the absolute liberty of his Sovereignty, either to Save or Destroy, Jer. 18. 16 *O house of Israel cannot I do with you as the Potter.* But God hath not yet taken away his Covenant from us, he hath not yet said of us (as of this People in our text) either *Loruhamah, I will no more have mercy,* or *Loammi, ye are not my People, I will not be your God ;* nor broken the staff of *Beauty* or of *Bands.* He doth yet own us and call us his People, and give us leave to call him our God, yea our Father and our Fathers God also. We may yet Pray in Faith as the Church, Isa. 63. 15 *Look down from Heaven and behold, from the habitation of thy Holiness, and thy glory, where is thy strength, thy zeal, the sounding of thy bowels, and thy mercy, are thy restrained?--- Doubtless thou art our Father : and as Isa. 64. 8, 9. O Lord thou art our Father---behold see we beseech thee, we are all thy People : and as Jer. 14. 9. Yet thou O Lord art in the midst of us we are called by thy Name, leave us not.*

3. *God delights to Save his People by Himself, thereby most gloriously to magnify his own Wisdom and Power above man and means ; as in our Text : I will Save them by the Lord their God, and will not Save them by Bow, nor by Sword, nor by Battle, nor by Horses, nor by Horsemen : Observe, God would not Save them by Ordinary means, but by Himself, that he might exalt himself in his own Strength, Psal. 21. 13. Be thou exalted in thine own Strength, so we will sing and praise thy Power.* Sometimes God Saves his People by terrible things in Providence, Psal. 65. 5. *By terrible things in Righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our Salvation.* By wonderful vicissitudes of Providential dispensations, the Wheels of Divine Providence

vidence, are sometimes so *high*, that they are *dreadful*, Ezek. 1. 18. This made the Apostle to break forth, into highest expressions of Admiration and Adoration with doxology, Rom. 11. 33. *O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out; who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or, who hath been his Counsellor: For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen.* There will be a time, when the Church shall sing the Song of Moses, and the Lamb, Rev. 15. 3. *Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, O thou King of Saints.* O that New-England may live to have her part in this Song.

4. If God shall thus Save us by himself: *It will be the most full, perfect, saving and glorious Salvation that ever God worketh for his People in this World.* He will magnifie New-England again before the World; he will make us again a Praise in the earth, by causing our righteousness to go forth as brightness, and our Salvation as a Lamp which burneth, Isa. 62. 1, 7. *God will glorifie himself before all people in us, when he shall thus Save us from our sins & apostacy, by the power of his Spirit, in a general work of Conversion and Reformation; and by a glorious resurrection of Religion, in the life and power of it; and by the return of his spiritual and gracious Presence unto us in the fulness of it; and so by causing his face to shine upon us.* O this will be glorious Salvation! and that is the Salvation which I have intended and spoken of all along; and when this Salvation comes, then shall that great Promise unto the Church be fulfilled to us, Jer. 33. 9. *And I will cleanse*

cleanse them from all their Iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon their iniquities,-- and it shall be unto me for a Name of joy, a praise and an honour before all Nations of the earth, which shall bear of the good that I will do to them, and they shall fear and tremble, for all the goodness, and for all the Prosperity that I shall procure unto it. In that day will God accomplish that great Promise unto us, Zeph. 3. 17. In that day it shall be said unto Jerusalem, fear not,-- the Lord thy God is in the midst of thee, mighty, he will save, he will rejoyce over thee with joy, rest in his love to thee, joy over thee with singing. O blessed, will such of the Servants of God be, who shall survive, or hereafter live to see the accomplishment. Yea, blessed shall we be, may we dy in the Faith, hope, confidence and comfort of the accomplishment of this Promise, in Gods time to his people and Churches here: I will have mercy upon New-England, and I will Save them, by the Lord their God. What remains then but that we believe, pray and wait for as much as the Lord waiteth that he may be gracious to us, and he will be exalted that he may have mercy upon us, for the Lord is a God of Judgment, and blessed are all those that wait for Him.

FINIS.

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